

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 6-9, 14, 15 and 22-28 are now pending in the application, with Claims 7, 8, 14, 15, 22 and 26 being independent. Claims 1-5, 10-13 and 16-21 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 6-9, 14, 15, 22-24 and 26 have been amended and Claims 27 and 28 have been added herein.

Initially, Applicants request that the Examiner consider the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed May 26, 2004, and indicate such consideration by initialing and returning a copy of the Form PTO-1449 provided therewith. A copy of the Form PTO-1449 is provided herewith for the Examiner's convenience.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 recite allowable subject matter. These claims were objected to for being dependent upon rejected base claims. In order to expedite allowance, Claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form and are now believed to be in condition for allowance. In addition, dependent Claims 6 and 9 have been amended to depend from allowable Claim 7 and new dependent Claims 27 and 28 are based on Claims 6 and 9, respectively, but depend from allowable Claim 8. Accordingly, Claims 6, 9, 27 and 28 are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Applicant also notes with appreciation the indication that Claims 22-26 are allowed. Minor changes have been made to several of these claims. However, these

changes are not believed to affect the allowability of the claims and have not been made for any reasons related to patentability. Accordingly, Claims 22-26 are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-6, 9-13 and 16-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection and solely to expedite issuance, Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-5, 10-13 and 16-21. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by Claims 6-9, 14, 15 and 22-28 and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Williamson', written over a horizontal line.

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